

March 4, 2021

To: House Finance
From: Economic Progress Institute
Re: Testimony in Support of H-5012 NURSING HOME STAFFING AND QUALITY CARE ACT

The Economic Progress Institute writes in support of H-5012. The bill addresses critical issues that are necessary to ensure that seniors who need the 24-7 care provided by nursing facilities live safely in those environments.

By establishing minimum staffing standards, we ensure that residents will receive the quality care that they deserve. Rhode Island is the only state in New England and one of only eleven states nationwide without a staffing standard. The minimum standard of 4.1 hours of resident care per day is the federal recommendation for quality care and it is unacceptable for Rhode Island to fail to protect residents of nursing facilities by failing to abide by at least this minimum.

As has been highlighted by the COVID-19 crisis, the staff at nursing homes are incredibly hard working and extremely dedicated to providing the best care to their residents. COVID has also highlighted how underpaid these 'essential workers' are and have been. Now is the time to make investments to provide a fair wage to these front-line workers. It is critical to make an investment in wages both to ensure that working in a nursing home is an attractive profession as well as to provide economic security for people doing this important work. Additional investment for training and skills enhancement for staff to provide care for residents with increasing acuity and complex healthcare needs will help ensure that appropriate care is provided.

We look forward, this year, to enactment of the legislation and swift implementation of the protections that the bill provides.

Thank you.